1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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any, and then begins to prepare a meal. Within the local lineage these visits are frequent, especially during festivals.

Rice and money are borrowed—always without interest—within the local lineage, though there are cases in which help is denied. Occasionally members may contribute funds so that a young member may obtain an education; however, prior to this century education was extremely rare among the southern Santal, among whom missionary efforts were not nearly so intense as among the northern Santal.

Though an entire local lineage is not likely to reside in a single village, the members inevitably live near one another. Typically, the founders of a village are members of a single local lineage. Members of this founding lineage thus tend to have more and superior land than later immigrants. In most instances the chief offices of the village, i.e., "village headman" and "village priest" belong to the founding lineage. The rule of primogeniture obtains, though upon the death of any officer the villagers must accede in the choice of a new officer. To what degree the villagers may in fact determine who shall fill the position is not clear, though there are cases in which an older son of a deceased headman or priest was passed over in favor of a younger son on the basis of alleged incompetence. Although the village must give its assent in selecting leaders—and to the decisions of leaders as well, since there is nothing more than the consent of the governed to support such decisions—important control of village affairs does lie within the control of the founding local lineage through its control of offices, superior wealth, and prestige.

In the traditional system, disputes within a village are brought to the attention of the headman by the contending parties. He may suggest some compromise if it is not a question

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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workers, was founded as an ordinary agricultural village not more than about sixty years ago. But such opportunities decreased throughout the nineteenth and this century. One inevitable result was to increase wealth differences and to make them more permanent.

A major consequence of increased wealth differences has been the strain placed on internal solidarity by "envy" (*bisa*; Hindi: *hinska*) and even more by fear of "envy." What this term conveys is concealed malicious intent based upon desire for what another possesses. Though Santal society has long been plagued with accusations of witchcraft, the notion that its practice is almost invariably deliberate and that it arises from envy is of modern origin. Though it is recognized that men may be "envious," it is thought that females most often are guilty and that it is only they who practice witchcraft. Fertile grounds for envy, and attendant witchcraft, appeared when wealthy Santal began using their capital to hire other Santal, to loan money, paddy, and seed at interest, to buy forest land, and even in a few cases to invest in various small-scale enterprises. Relations arising from these investments are often strained and a source of resentment. Envy also arises from observation of what wealth procures in terms of traditional Santal pleasures and from its use in settling disputes.

Aside from the exacerbation of "envy," which increased wealth differences produced, the market imposed other, more general strains. It is difficult to square the basic reciprocity of relations in a kin society like that of the Santal with the impersonal and contractual relations of the market. Though the Santal struggle over land with as much ferocity as any peasants, they find it hard to insist on strictly market relations with other commodities, especially if pressed by kinsmen. A few Santal

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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437 entrepreneurs have gained notoriety by their greed, but more
• [426] have failed in business from having granted credit and finding it difficult to collect the debt. Traditional Santal are poor at haggling even with non-Santal, though they understand the basic principle of the market and may even be conversant with a variety of devices used to swindle the unsuspecting bargainer. They will rise early to buy at a market before it becomes crowded or to intercept dealers on their way who will sell for less while en route. They are often aware of price differences and will walk several miles to buy at the cheaper and sell at the more expensive market. But the traditional Santal, once at the market, is too eager a buyer, too poor a haggler, and too readily drawn into pleasant social intercourse to hold his own.

556 Despite envy, traditional Santal society developed something of a *modus vivendi* between rich and poor. At all festivals, at marriages in particular, and in everyday affairs the wealthy are required to validate their status by giving more than others. The wealthy are thus the greatest providers of "pleasure" for the community, and though there is envy as well as respect, considerable healing is accomplished and unity restored at major ceremonies to which the wealthy have contributed much. Also, in the traditional setting, even with wealth differences and the context of the market, the cultural gap between rich and poor
[212] tended to be minimal. Fifty years ago the "elite" Santal, i.e., those with wealth and power, were almost totally illiterate; their style of life, judging by what one presently observes among illiterate and unschooled members of the elite, was only trivially different from that of their less well-situated neighbors. In terms of "likeness" the solidarity of the community was not greatly disturbed by wealth differences.

ooo Nonetheless, elite Santal were somewhat more Hinduized

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

others) originally belonged to the Kherwars, especially to the Kisku and Baske septs. It is also told that those who left the Kherwars and became Dikos spread in all directions. 539 829

We are here touching on one of India's problems, and a few words may be permitted. First as regards the wanderings of the Santals, as they may be observed at present and probably are a repetition of what has happened in earlier times. The Santals are among the very best of clearers of jungle in India, themselves originally a forest people. But they have not reached the stage of being really good agriculturists; it must also be remembered that they have very little understanding of the use of money; they may be said to know the value of a pice, but do not know the value of the rupee. What often follows is this: they get into the hands of the moneylenders who will do all they can to get hold of the fields cleared by the Santals, who frequently will not know or think of any other way of getting out of their difficulties than by emigrating to some other place, always towards the rising of the sun. Combined with this we have their backwardness as agriculturists: they have little idea of getting all that is possible out of the lands they have cleared or are occupying. They are a prolific race; the time comes when they have not enough land to support themselves. The result is, that either the whole family, or some of them, will go away, either to find fresh jungle to clear and occupy, or to work for others as labourers. It is in their blood to seek fresh fields; as they often are heard to say, they have a wish "to see land". Now if the whole family does not move away, some will stay; those who stay will gradually get under the influence of the more civilized neighbours and may ultimately become attached to these. 167 241 [436] [426]

After this digression a little more about the traditions. As regards Mandǫ Sin (by some also called Madhwa or Madhǫ) some have a very detailed story, something like a folk-tale. A servant girl is stated to have been with child by some of the young men of "the kings", who threatened to kill her if she revealed anything. She bore her child in the forest and left him there, but came every day to suckle him. This went on for two months; then one day the mother did not come quickly; the child became hungry and commenced to cry. Some Kisku girls heard this, found the child and brought it home with them. They were convinced that the child was that of the girl; nothing was said about this, but they asked the girl to take charge of the child, saying that they had adopted it. The child grew up, became very intelligent and clever in all kinds of work. The king gave him office, and he gradually became indispensable. After some time the king asked him whether they had given him a wife; and as this was not the case the king ordered him to bring all the principal men to him; he wanted to ask them the reason for this. In spite of orders and persuasion they would not come and would not be brought, although the king sent elephants, horses, etc., to carry them. The king became angry and ordered Madhwa to go and apply sindur to all the daughters of these men, to the girls he might care to make his wives. He consequently went to these men and asked them whether they would 539

2: Skreferud M-9 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

From Jhet to Bhador (i. e., from the middle of May to the middle of August) they do agricultural work. Then they plough from morning to noon, and later on they work making ricefield-ridges and so on. First they sow millets and jungle corn, later janhę millet, maize, bajra, kodę, raher, ghaṅgra, and sutri[1]. After this they sow paddy for transplanting. They hoe the maize (in this the women help them). They do the first ploughing for paddy-planting; thereupon they plough the second time, thereupon plough the third time; they also make ready the ricefield ridges; they make the fields muddy and harrow; then they pull the paddy seedlings out. (To plant the paddy is women's work.)

At this time they sow cotton and tilmiṅ oilseed[2] in the course of the month of Sun (middle of July to middle of August). In Bhador (middle of August to middle of September) they plough the fields for horęć and surguja[3] and sow these. They harvest the maize. In this work and in hoeing the cotton the women help them. They harvest the iri, gundli, kodę, and erba millets[4]. In this work also the women assist them. The men thresh.

In the month of Dasăe (middle of September to middle of October) they plough the homestead field where the maize was, and sow mustard seed, and they harvest and thresh janhę millet and the early paddy. In Aghăr (middle of November to middle of December) they dig and plane the threshing-floor, and together with the women they harvest the paddy, cut the bajra and tilmiṅ, cut the raher, pluck the ghaṅgra and sutri, and pull out the horęć and surguja. The women alone pull out the cotton. When the men have carted all this up to the threshing-floor, they spread it out on this, and joining cattle together they thresh. Having threshed out the seed they throw the straw away, having winnowed the grain they make a heap of it, and having twisted straw-ropes and straw-strings they put it into bundles. The other crops they beat out and put into bundles. Thereupon they cart all to their houses. In the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) they harvest the mustard and cut the thatching grass. Now the agricultural work is finished.

Besides all this work the men have all business with the money-lenders, and they pay the rent to the village headman. Men and women help each other to press oil in the oil-press. They do not make oil from the mustard and tilmiṅ; they sell this. They make oil from several kinds of fruit: kŏiṅḍi, baru, kujri, bando, boṅga sarjom, oraḍom, loppoṅ, korońj, nim, and others[5].

[1] Janhę is Panicum sumatrense, L.; bajra, Sorghum vulgare, Pers.; kodę, Eleusine coracana, Gaertn.; raher, Cajanus indicus, Spreng.; ghaṅgra, Dolichos Catjang, Willd.; sutri, Phaseolus calcaratus, Roxb.

[2] Tilmiṅ, Sesamum indicum, DC. [3] Horęć, Dolichos biflorus, L. Surguja, Guizotia abyssinica, Cass.

[4] Iri, Panicum Crus-galli, L.; gundli, Paniceum miliare, Lamarck; kodę, Eleusine coracana, Gaertn.; erba, Setaria Italica, Kunth. [5] Kŏiṅḍi, the fruit of the Mahua tree, Bassia latifolia, Roxb.; baru, Schleichera trijuga, L.; kujri, Celastrus paniculatus, Willd.; bando, Spathodea Rheedyi, Roxb.; boṅga sarjom, Vatica lanceaefolia, Talauma; oraḍom, Ficus communis, L.; loppoṅ, Terminalia belerica, Roxb.; korońj, Pongamia [illegible], Vent.; nim, Melia Azadirachta, L.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

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they cause themselves to be fined on account of transgressions and thereby become paupers; how should such people become wealthy?

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Some people become worn out by constantly having to pay off the debts of their father; they are unable to raise themselves, they live pressed down under debts; the money-lenders charge an extremely high interest, and they keep accounts unrighteously. If you fall into the hands of a usurer, you will even in three, four generations certainly not be able to pay and free yourself. Your calves and goats, your cows and buffaloes, your kodalis and axes, your paddy and rice they will unjustly take away, and if you forbid them, they will thrash you and strip you.

But if people live along in the Santal country as paupers, while they have the full use of hands and feet, then this is surely mostly due to their own fault. People who have no plough-cattle will easily be able to get hired bullocks at four rupees yearly. And people who have many children are able to exchange service for bullocks. Or they are able to plough by exchange of labour and bullocks. Exchange of labour and bullocks is as follows: A man ploughs two days for the owner and gets breakfast with him, and then he ploughs one day for himself. The exchange of service for bullocks is as follows: A man's son works as servant with the owner of the plough-cattle, and his wages are the hire of a pair of plough-cattle. With the exception of a few landlords they do not take unjust rent. For every unit (r̥ak) of land a rent of six or seven rupees has to be paid, and with one unit (r̥ak) they earn so much in crops that the landowner gets one seventh part and the farmer six sevenths. And people who have freshly reclaimed land get more. The meaning of freshly reclaimed land is as follows: When they found a village, they will, when four or five years have passed, divide the land into units. So many residents as there are at that time, into so many units they will divide the land, and the landlord will get rent for each (r̥ak) unit. At first they have to pay five four-anna bits for each unit. When they have had the use of it for about five years, the landowner will charge more per unit. But it will continue to be the same unit (r̥ak), however much fresh ground they break up. When new settlers come, the old settlers will give them about one fourth part of their respective units, and they will divide the rent. Thereupon the old resident and the new resident will, both of them, clear fresh land and make boundaries; this they call kh̥ṣṭi (freshly reclaiming additional land). However much they may go on reclaiming fresh land, their rent will not be increased thereby; they will only have to pay the rent of the original unit (r̥ak). But because they are lazy, some people do not reclaim fresh land; when the landowner raises the rent of people, such ones will feel it heavy, naturally not so those who have reclaimed fresh land.

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Lazy people do not work carefully; they plough negligently, as it may go. When such people have just a little, their only interest is to eat and drink and lie down to sleep; they become paupers, what else can happen to them?

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464 One kind of poor people do not become absolute paupers, because when they have no necessary work of their own, they work for wages with wealthy people; thereby they get their subsistence, and people also feel compassion with them. They put their children to work as cattle-herds, or they make them fetch water and leaves, and people give them more than what they have a right to get, and when their children go to glean at harvest time, they leave much for them. People who have no bodily strength they also help in the same way, if they have no relatives who are able to help them. And when orphans 736 have no natural helpers, the village headman and his deputy will take such friendless ones to themselves, and they live in great ease, because no one will be able to snub them calling them orphans. Afterwards when they have grown up, they marry them off. Formerly there were no begging people, and also nowadays only a very few have learnt to beg from the Dekos and walk round in the villages and beg; this they do not call good, and there is no need; because if they have a wish to work, they may easily support themselves in the villages. Halt and lame, blind and not fully developed persons might get gruel, by only watching the houses and doors of people.

556 Some good people could easily become wealthy; they have plough-cattle, they also have working people; but from fear of people they do not become very wealthy. They earn only just as much as to get food. Some women, it is said, are very envious of wealthy people; they say: These have very fine things to eat and drink; we have nothing. Then they cast an evil spell on them; then these wealthy people become ill, they become utter paupers, and they die. And such women also bury bongas in the house of wealthy people, so that these die thereby.

g. Mutual help in the village.

476 Formerly people who were not poor also helped each other very much, when there was any need; and nowadays also good people help each other. They ask each other for fire, [178] they give each other lime and tobacco to chew; kodalis and forks, axes and adzes, chisels [426] and mallets, ploughs and clod-crushers, pestles and wooden mortars, winnowing-fans and baskets, and so on, they lend to each other. And if a man has no cart, or he has too few, the village people will without taking any pay let him have cart and bullocks for one day. But if any of the bullock-owner's people go along to drive the cart, the man who has asked for the loan will have to give rice and curry. And also when building a house, when ploughing, planting, making ricefield ridges, and harvesting they help each other, and those who ask for help have only to give rice and curry, and occasionally they also give them beer to make them glad. And in fever and illness they visit each other, they help each other to pass the night, and when there is any necessity, they also help each other fetching water and leaves, plastering the court-yard with cow-dung and pounding, and men who know to give medicine do this without any charge. They get food, and when

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the patients recover, they entertain the medicine givers. Since the time of the Santal rebellion they are not helping each other so much. However much they may have, some people are so stingy, they will absolutely not give anything, they utterly refuse to help. But no one likes such heartless people, and if they themselves fall into difficulties, no one will look at them; they rather say: Thakur is punishing this man in retribution. 476 [178]

Paddy and rice, salt and oil, money they also lend each other without any interest, but not for a long time. If they take this for a long time, we call it a debt, and in this case interest has to be paid. For paddy to be used as food 50 pct. interest, for paddy for seed 100 pct. interest, and for money 25 pct. interest has to be paid. 426 •

h. Working in company with others.

The Santals, men and women, very much like to work in company with others. When men go to the forest or to some hill to cut wood for a plough, a plough-beam, a yoke, rafters, firewood, posts, roof-beams, cross-beams, and so on, then they go in company. To enter a forest alone is very dangerous, and when you have companions, the work is not so strenuous. Also when going to the landlord or to a money-lender, they help each other, and at harvest time they make their threshing-floors together at the same place, in order that they may not be alone at night, and the work also goes easily in this way. Cattle-herd boys mostly herd in company, three or four of them together; by turns they drive the cattle round about, and when there is any danger, they help each other. The women also, when they go to draw water, or go to pluck vegetables and bring leaves, or when they go to a market or a shop to sell or buy, then they go in company with others. 476

i. Looking people up for a talk.

When they have no work the village people go and look each other up a good deal. The men go about on the pretext of asking for lime and tobacco; they chew the tobacco, and also talk together about their health and circumstances and so on. In the evening they come together at the Mañjhi than; they start some humorous conversation, they jest together and talk together without restraint about a thousand matters, to ease their mind. The women also visit each other on the pretext of asking for fire or something; but they mostly have their deliberations at the place where they draw water. There they tell each other their troubles and joys and anything happening in the village. But some women do not, like the men, talk what is blameless; their words may be aggravating, and therefore very noisy quarrels sometimes arise. 521 574 [578]

j. Concerning relationship.

The Santals have really two kinds of relationship, relationship by birth and relationship brought about by marriage. But besides these two kinds the Santals arrange village relationship without there being any real relationship. Some people arrange a relationship in 602

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beans hoṛoḍ, reher, ghaṅgra, sutri; further alpalus, vegetables, fowls, pigs, goats, hares, peafowls, the Indian Gaur, the Sambar Stag, birds, and the winged creation. And salt they were preparing from saline earth. They scrape off and bring some earth, mix it up in an earthenware pot and strain it with water; they boil the water, and when the water evaporates, the salt comes there. Because it is very pungent, they cover it up in a cloth and bury it in hot ashes; then it becomes tasty salt. They were preparing this during the cold season. Oil they were pressing out of different forest fruits; they were weaving clothes for themselves. People of the Ṭuḍu sept were making all kinds of implements of iron; and they were themselves making winnowing-fans and baskets, earthenware vessels, and so on. Whether we formerly had gold or not, we do not know; but in the old country they called gold samanom. Later on people of the Baske sept were transacting business, buying and selling by barter, and since rupees and pice have appeared, we buy and sell using money. Formerly also the village people were bartering, some bartered buffaloes for goats, some goats for pigs, and so on.

Nowadays people of both sexes have become very lazy; they do not press oil, neither do they prepare salt; they do not much weave cloth either; they buy everything; thereby we Santals are becoming poor, and we are becoming deeply involved in debt to the money-lenders.

178 433 [262] [263] [184] 178 497 [184] [426]

v. About debts and loans.

In former times no people were getting into debt or taking loans from the money-lenders; and there were no money-lenders either. In the Sikhar country the money-lenders found us for the first time. There the first money-lender with the Santals lived in Nanduara. From that time up to now we are in their hands, and they are tearing us up like vultures. By constantly paying we become numb; still the debt never comes to an end. They say: "If a seer has come into the house, it will never get out again"; "a Deko usurer, an old hyena, even old bones they crunch". Really it was also due to hardship in connexion with these that we ran away from Sikhar. At first they did not unrighteously charge us interest to such a degree; they were taking only 25 pct. in paddy or money; but gradually they commenced to charge exorbitantly. For a debt of three or four rupees they would without justice or reason drive pair after pair of plough-cattle away, and if you remonstrated with them, they would at once commence to strike.

178 426 [539]

But there is fault also on our side. Foolishly the Santals run into the hands of the usurers; whether they will be able to pay back or not, this they do not think of, and when they have what is needed to pay with, they will not pay at once; consequently interest upon interest is heaped up; thereupon the money-lender comes and carries all and everything away. And in the present age many Santals also deceitfully cheat the usurers and money-lenders of what is their right.

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178 or rice along with them, so that there is no food at home; in spite of this when they come home and no food has been prepared for them, they scold their wives a good deal and even beat them. The poor wife, where is she to get anything with which to prepare food? [426] If they have no paddy or rice, they will drink, making debts. Then in the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) the Supḍi comes, harasses and threatens them, and carts their paddy bundles away. The wife and children of such a man pass their time in much suffering, as regards food and clothes. From the forest they bring vegetables and different kinds of tubers, cook and eat these. Formerly they were drinking four, or six, or if it became very much, eight leaf-cups; in this way their strength was not diminished; they were very strong and vigorous like youths. Nowadays, by constantly drinking and by marrying before they are fullgrown, they are becoming puny and stunted in growth; by behaving in such a way,— how should they retain their strength?

c. Stories and folk-tales.

538 By fairy-stories, folk-tales, and conundrums the Santals feel much enjoyment. In the evening the old men teach them this. The sons and daughters-in-law are occupied in the evening cooking rice and curry, making leaf-cups and leaf-plates, and the old people, husband and wife, tell the children fairy-stories and folk-tales and ask them riddles, to make them happy. If anyone knows a number of fairy-stories and folk-tales, the young people of the village will also gather at his place. And at the threshing-floors, when it is cold and they lie in the huts there, the young men learn much of this. Some people know so many; they tell the others folk-tales the whole night until dawn, still they are not finished, and those who listen do not get tired either; at such times they have no thought at all of dancing; listening they are utterly charmed by joy[3].

Girls and boys mostly learn riddles, and all day long they ask each other such. The young men learn more fairy-stories and folk-tales; even if girls learn the same, they will only get enough courage to let this be known in the presence of people when they have reached the age of old women. The folk-tales are especially about jackals; the fairy-stories are about kings and landlords and about different kinds of people, and the riddles are about a thousand different matters. When they start a riddle, they say: "A riddle, kita, kite", thereupon they give out the riddle[4].

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113 [114] [3] The Santals have a very large number of folk-tales and stories. The present writer has collected several hundreds. Ten such tales have been published in the Publications of the Indian Institute of the Royal Frederik University, Kristiania 1924, and 93 other tales by Institutet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning (Santal Folk Tales, vol. I to III, Oslo 1929, 1927, and 1939). A few have also been published in a similar way by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. The manuscript of several hundreds, all written down for me by Santal men and women, is now in the University Library, Oslo. [4] See P. O. Bodding, Santal Riddles. Witchcraft among the Santals. Oslo Etnografiske Museums Skrifter, vol. 2, num. 2. Oslo 1940.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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Jòmak' ñunyak' bòcha bànuk' taleya,
Mènt' ñèpèl bòcha ahajibà.
Akal kèdae gateñ sāwanek'edae
Ità ràmu gateñ, bale ñawana,
Sanam hòpòniñko ḍiṅgàṛ cabayen.

(Translation)

Welcome, welcome! O friends dear!
(We have) neither food nor drink to offer.
But we offer you our greetings,
(It matters little whether) the harvest
failed or it was in plenty;
For want of seeds (and consequent want
of food)
All my sons have nothing of their own.

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Out to trace variations in Mayurbhanj from the Santals in the Santal Parganas, we were somewhat pleased to see that their houses were better built and more commodious, but the inner economic structure told the self-same tale as in the folk-song.

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[114]
[123]

We selected some villages at random and questioned the Santals (without claiming for ourselves the functions of the economic surveyor) on the point. But they replied, "We are very poor. Our average

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[464]

agricultural income is from Rs. 5 to 6 per month. Those more industrious supplement it by working as day labourers which may bring them Rs. 3 more.

[426]

But about half of the population are indebted to

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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mahajans and many of us run to the tea-gardens to earn a living.'"[1]

Statistics sheds further light on the condition of the cattle, the mainstay of an agricultural population. "A large section of the aborigines consisting of the Santals, and the Bhumijs, and forming about 50 per cent of the population, do not care for milk as an item of nutrition. This perhaps contributes to a certain extent to their indifference to the improvement of cattle. Even as beasts of burden or as instruments of husbandry, the cattle in the state are very poor in quality."[2] So depending on such ricketty props, they can only turn out paddy and thereafter "biri" (*mug* pulse), in pathetic ignorance of supplementary means of livelihood like cottage-industries.

Little wonder that with such limited means of livelihood and scanty fare as we have already noticed they offer little resistance to intoxication. Their wants and worries weigh upon them so much that they take to drunken forgetfulness to drown their

1 Ref. *Census Report of Mayurbhanj*, 1931, p. 10, which reads "During the last decade 1,497 coolies belonging to this State were recruited for work in the tea-gardens by the garden-sirdars."

2 There are in all 600,000 heads of cattle in the State (Total population 8089,603) page 71 *Census Report* of Mayurbhanj, 1931.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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614 *Holarrhena Antidysenterica*). This sub-clan does not eat the leaves of these trees.

(ix) Karda Hèmbròm (Kaḍa Hèmbròm?). Also referred to in the Mayurbhanj Census Report.

5. *Màrṇḍi*

[554] [426] [578] The fifth class is the clan of the Màrṇḍis, the rich men and money-lenders of the Santal traditions, with whom, we have seen, the Kiskus had a severe clash. The term "màrṇḍi" means "a weed of rice cultivation (*Ischaemum rugosum*, Salisb)," and we were told that "màrṇḍi" grass continues to be the totem of the sub-clan, Nij Màrṇḍi, and if any of them chances to uproot one such grass, he will make a profound "johar" (*salutation*) and replant it.

The following sub-clans of the Màrṇḍis were noticed at Mayurbhanj:—

(i) Nij Màrṇḍi—with taboo of "Màrṇḍi" grass.

(ii) Miru baha Màrṇḍi:—The flower of a wild plant which yields a good fibre (*Abutilon Indicum*, Don) is the totem of this sub-clan, and they do not even touch these.

(iii) Bhaduli Màrṇḍi:—An interesting story was narrated to us by Sunaram Sòrèn, a Santal college student of Bamanghati, Mayurbhanj, to explain the genesis of this sub-clan, who, he assures us, traditionally belonged at first to the foregoing "Miru baha" sub-group. He said, "Once a *Miru baha*

retired to the Rajmahal Hills. In 1851 Captain Sherwill found 83,265 Santals in Daminikoh alone. 175 167 114 [162]

Santal Rebellion (Hul) of 1855. Mr. Buchanan Hamilton has mentioned in his unpublished manuscipt that "the Santals has settled in the Dumka sub-division by 1809 having come last from Birbhum in consequence of the annoyance which they have received from its Zamindars". In 1818 Mr. Sutherland found them engaged in clearing the jungles under the hills in Godda sub-division. Mr. Dunbar, Collector of Bhagalpur, mentioned that by 1836 about 427 villages had been established by the Santals in the Damin area.

These Santals of the Daminikoh in the year 1855 became rebellious. The chief cause of this rebellion was the oppression of the Mahajans, the Darogas and the corruption of the Amlas. These Mahajans gave the Santals money as a loan with high interest and one he had contracted a debt he had little chance of escape, because if his creditor sued him, the Santals could not produce any authentic record, whereas the creditor had his ledgers and day book. These Mahajans sometimes without going to court to realise his capital and interest, sent his agents to take away their cattle forcibly. The Santals bore this oppression thinking that it was useless for them to obtain redress against the wealthy Mahajans, besides that had not enough money to pay the Amlas and Pleaders in the Court. If they approached the Court and loged a complaint against these Mahajaus, they only got an order on the police to enquire and report, but the police generally sided with the Mahajans and submitted reports in their favour. [1 Erratum: i.e., "once". 2 Erratum: i.e., Mahajans. -- Analyst] 175 648 669 426 [692] [625]

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175 648 669 426 The Santals of the Damin complained that they got different treatment than their neighbours the Suria Paharias and the Mal Paharias, and that the Santals who were living outside the Damin areas, were better off. Inside Damin the Zamindars ousted their Santal tenants from the lands they had cleared, although these lands had been settled with them by the Zamindars on long leases at low rates, on condition that they would clear the jungles. But as cultivation extended, the non-Santals forced the Santals to till some of their lands and thus they gradually extended their holdings, and ultimately appropriated the best portion of the lands in the village by exacting mortgages in return of loans. Thus the Santals moved to other parts where they settled by clearing fresh jungles and establishing new villages. Again they were forced to leave the villages. When the Santals lodged complaints against the Mahajans in the court, no steps were taken by the executive (naibs, darogas etc.) as they were ready instruments in the hands of the Mahajans. The Santals who took loans from the Mahajan, could not pay in cash but worked out their debt by personal services, thus they became slaves in the hands of the creditor. The sons and daughters or his other nearest relations were also liable for this sort of service.

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175 648 669 Due to all these oppressions the Santals were very much annoyed, and as a result of this in 1854 they attacked the houses of some Mahajans at night. The authorities caught them and treated them as dacoits. They were tried and convicted although they protested against it. After a year, again the same thing was repeated but this time the Government released them as it appeared that the crime was due to the oppression

1 [Erratum: this should read "Sauria". Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

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[634] The Governor understanding the mistake of his predecessors tried to appease the Santal by removing the genuine grievances. He made the Santal territory a separate district called Daminikoh, with four sub-districts, Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. The charge of these sub-districts were given to a Deputy Commissioner and four assistant Commissioners. The [625] regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping [622] peace and order and of arresting of criminals was vested in the hands of the parganait and the village headman.

In the social sphere also steps were taken to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed Santals. The [426] money lenders were not permitted to extort their debts [804] over and over again by recourse to trickery or otherwise. False weights and measures were corrected and cheating in this department was punished and the Santals could now sell their produce in the market witout fear of being swindled. The abolition of serf- [566] dom and the new relationship between capital and [466] labour were far reaching reforms, and the Santal could earn his living as a free worker on the Railway instead of being a slave of a powerful protector. Again, the [464] beginning of tea plantations about this time gave a fresh impetus to profitable work and a higher economic level was achieved by the Santal, who further decided to migrate to the tea aren, and on the expiry of the contract to return with a tidy some of money. Such a diverting of labour caused an easing in the struggle for existence among those who stayed at home and enabled the migrant to earn enough to establish himself securely for life.

Thus out of the rebellion came some lasting good and the Santals in the end benefited from it.

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"The *raksa* resembles the *karha*. It is a piece of wood about two to three mm. long and 15 to 20 cm. broad, slightly thinner than a *karha*. The *raksa* is slighly curved and has an edge. It has two holes cut equidistant from the centre for the *kalka*, and has a handle (*raksa karmba*) fixed in the middle. It resembles the *rotok* and is worked very much like *karha*. It is used only for levelling rice-fields just before the planting, and as it is used in watery mud, there is no need for the same strength as in the *karha*. Only few men in a village have a *raksa*. They willingly lend it to those who need such an implement."

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Hoe (Kudi):—The Santal *kudi* is an ordinary type of hoe which is used in Bengal and in some other parts of India. The implement consists of two parts—one is wooden handle and other is iron blade. The handle is about 2'-6" long, roughly circular in cross-section about 2" in diameter and slightly thicker at one end where it is to be inserted into the socket of the blade. The blade is made of a flat sheet of iron. It consists of a body which is more or less rectangular in shape, twelve inches long and eight inches broad. The side edges of the body are slightly concave in outline. The broad projected rear portions of the body form the shoulders and from the middle of this side the neck rises. The neck ends with a socket in which the wooden handle is inserted. The Santals use this for digging earth and also with this they make and repair ridges of the rice fields.

Mallet (Clod Breaker)—It is a wooden hammer. It consists of two parts, wooden handle and a cylindrical wooden head which acts as a hammer. The handle is

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175 a great stir throughout the Santal country. The story has
648 become part and parcel of the consciousness of Santals every-
669 where, and the leaders are still celebrated in songs that are
[538] current far from the places in which they performed their
[533] exploits. The rebellion had no direct connection with the Sepoy mutiny. Both risings did, however, originate in the unsettled state of the country and the inexperience of the British authorities. The Santals rose against the intolerable rapacity of the moneylenders, with whom the subordinate officials of the government, and particularly the police, were in league. It became necessary to call out strong armed forces to restore law and order before the grievances could be redressed. The rebellion followed a pattern one might expect when ill-armed rioters faced armed and disciplined troops. The Santals gathered, sometimes numbered in thousands, and proceeded to plunder the nearby bazaar towns. In the first flush of indignation and excitement they sought out their enemies, murdering police officials and moneylenders, as also other hapless individuals who came in their way. The alarmed government dispatched strong military forces to the area and proclaimed martial law. The disturbances dragged on in sporadic fashion for over two years, at the end of which the constructive measures of the government began to take effect. A new district was set up with special regard to the need for protecting the land of the Santals, and their village system was used in the organization set up for maintaining order by giving a measure of responsibility to their tribal officials.

175 Since that date the history of the Santals has been peaceful
648 and some measure of progress has been achieved. It was not
[423] however, until the second decade of the twentieth century that the Bengal Government passed an Act—the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act, 1918—which endeavoured to protect Santals and other aboriginals in Bengal in similar fashion. It prohibited the transfer of land from aboriginals without the permission of the courts and prevented the attachment of their lands for debts arising out of causes other than the non-payment of rent.

175 By that time most of the damage had been done, and con-
426 sequently the Santals are now overwhelmingly in the position
648 of under-tenants. The background of their economic life can be
423 seen in the following example, which is typical rather than peculiar. In 1896 the villagers of Ramboni borrowed the sum of forty rupees from their landlord in order to excavate an irrigation tank on their land. In the year 1913 they were sold

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up for non-payment of the accumulated debt, which by then was a considerably larger sum. They were thus compelled to make new agreements with their landlord at an enhanced rent and with inferior rights. The later passage of legislation has done little to lift the burden of despair about the future which is an unhappy characteristic of Santal life today. Such incidents explain in no small measure the cry of the heart which is heard from time to time: "Give us back our land." It is some consolation that the Act of 1918, followed by legislation during the last twenty years aimed at improving the status of the peasantry in Bengal, has brought to a close some of the worst chapters in a long and sordid story.

The community life of the Santal centres in his village, and is so organized as to make common action inevitable in social, economic and religious affairs. The houses are built on either side of the village street, which must be left wide enough for two bullock carts to pass each other. This street extends from east to west, the eastern end being known as the upper end. The houses, set close together, have their main door opening on to the village street, and each household is responsible for the state of the road outside its own residence. It is here in the village that the Santal learns how to live; here he is initiated into the traditional loyalties of the tribe, and the village of his birth exercises a deep influence over him all his days.

The village headman, or *manjhi*, is the man of greatest consequence in the community. The post is hereditary, and it passes ordinarily to the eldest son of the former headman. When the direct line of succession fails through lack of sons or from incapacity on the part of the natural heir, the office passes on to a brother or near relative on the paternal side. The history of the village is preserved in the tradition handed down concerning the headman's ancestry. For example, at Sarenga they tell a story of the three brothers who were the founders of the village and divided the village offices between them. Among them Lokhon has acquired the greatest measure of renown, and he is commemorated by a shrine outside the present village. The story is told that he died suddenly, and before the news of his death had spread through the village his spirit took possession of a young man sitting in the courtyard of a house some distance away, and through him Lokhon told the villagers that they were to make a special shrine for him. There is a ceremony at the beginning of each new year which suggests that at one time the appointment of the head-

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They owe their present position of affluence to Santal habits of insobriety. Secondly, much of the land has been acquired by trading castes from Bihar who followed the Santals when the country was being opened up. They brought with them such things as salt and cooking oil, which they exchanged for grain. Clothing was added at a later date, for until within living memory Santals largely wove their own clothes from cotton grown on the lands surrounding their homesteads. Like the Sundis, these traders provided credit facilities for their customers and so gained power over them. The monsoon fails on the average once in seven years in Western Bengal, and the traders import grain in times of scarcity. Formerly this was lent out at a recognized rate of interest amounting to 100 per cent. per annum. The only security which a Santal had to offer was a mortgage on his land, and, if the trader wished it, the almost inevitable result was an action in the courts, followed by an auction at which the creditor purchased the land. The third important class among the landlords are the Brahmins, descendants of the men who were brought into the country to act as priests and court officials to the local *rajas* or rulers. At the time when British rule was being established many of these *rajas* exercised control over tracts of country that were largely covered by forest and sparsely inhabited. They encouraged Santals and some other peoples to settle as cultivators, and they also rewarded the services of their Brahmin officials by grants of land. Brahmins are forbidden by caste rules to engage in cultivation, so they in their turn encouraged Santals to become their tenants.

The Santals have a proverb: "A *Deko* friend is like a thorn fence." In other words, if you stumble into it you are liable to suffer from scratches. They sometimes make fun of themselves and exaggerate the fear that they feel. Thus: "The elders used to run away and hide in the jungle whenever they saw an umbrella approaching the village." But in spite of the fun, the fear persists. A difficulty arose a few years ago in a village Santal church when the superintending missionary placed there as pastor a man who was a *Deko*. This resulted in a vigorous protest, and the leader of the villagers' delegation summed up their feelings in the following parable: "When a kite is wheeling overhead the chickens all take shelter under their mother's wings. After they have grown up they know that the kite can do them no harm, but nevertheless whenever a kite is overhead they quake inwardly and cannot get on with their pecking." In the company of non-Santals, a Santal is inclined to become tongue-

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was sent to the Sub-Divisional Officer with a petition. The result was negative. After still more deliberation we went to Dumka and with our Secretary's help placed the petition before the Deputy Commissioner. This was immediately granted. A few days after this nearly two thousand more of the population in this area, 80 per cent. of which is stated to be Santals, got their little share of the promised loan."[1]

At Sarenga as elsewhere the necessary preoccupation with the problem of daily bread led to other developments in policy. In addition to becoming a landlord the mission also became a cultivator and employer of labour, thus being in a position to introduce improvements in farming methods to the people in a practical manner and not merely by preaching. Furthermore, something had to be done about the problem of debt that was crippling the Santals. Loans were granted to individuals, and in this matter, too, a later generation of missionaries, which is wise after the event, is inclined to question the wisdom of what was done. An attempt was made in the early years to give loans to cultivators at reasonable rates of interest through the organization of a grain bank, but most of the beneficiaries, unaccustomed to any but the most overbearing and unscrupulous behaviour from their moneylenders in the past, did not see the urgency of loan repayment, and in later years there has been an attempt to establish co-operatives on a sounder basis. Some of the loans given in the early years in order to save land for a family were on a scale that a subsequent generation that has had to try to realize them can only regard as inordinately lavish. The need for this kind of help has been greatly diminished since protective legislation came into force.

If missionaries were compelled to work for economic justice often against their will, they found other spheres open to them which they were eager to enter. Everywhere they have been the pioneers of education for the Santals; until recently they were almost the only agencies in the field. In the district of Midnapore the American Baptist Mission has, by a delegation of authority by the government, been almost solely responsible for the administration of funds and the supervision of schools. These range from the village primary school with a single teacher to a Santal High School for boys where they may sit for the matriculation examination of Calcutta University. In the Bankura district a missionary has always been a member of the Santal Education

[1] *The Seventy-Fifth Annual Report of the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches, 1941*, pp. 46–47.